

English ones with respect to titles, and it would be easy to mention several instances in which the same has been used — by different writers — three or four times over. In any case, Zola reverted to the title of "Le Ddbficle" as being the most appropriate to his series, signifying as it did the "smash-up" of that imperial *regime* whose society he had been describing so long; and though charges of plagiarism were so often brought against him, it would not appear that any arose on this occasion.

Zola had found "L'Argent" a difficult subject, and now the preparation of "Le DdbUcle" proved a herculean task for him. He had never witnessed an engagement in the field; military matters were almost as foreign to him as financial ones. He had dealt with them in a few short stories only, such as "Le Oapitaine Burle" and "Les Quatre Jour-  
ndes de Jean G-ourdon." But he now visited all the battle-fields which were to figure in his narrative, he followed the line of march of the Seventh Army Corps, whose sufferings he intended to describe, he studied everything that had been printed and published in France on his subject, and he was fortunate enough to secure a large number of letters and manuscripts in which eye-witnesses recounted one and another episode of the battle of Sedan. Some of

those communications emanated from " privates," who set down their own curious personal experiences and often na'ivo impressions ; and for Zola's purpose these were even more valuable than the reports of generals and other officers. What he made of his subject the world knows; of all the books he ever wrote " La Débâcle " has circulated the most widely.

One notable effect of that great epic on war was to determine some revulsion of feeling in England with respect to